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20 November 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [] OBGI

THROUGH : Director of Special Projects

SUBJECT : Use of Color Photography for Geographic Intelligence

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REFERENCE : [], OBGI Requirements for Satellite System
Photography, 7 July 1970

1. Our recent discussions and those of the CIA Color Working Group have emphasized the need to take a closer look at the use of color photography for geographic intelligence purposes.

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2. The work of the last year or so of the Color Task Force and the CIA Color Working Group has tended to concentrate almost exclusively on

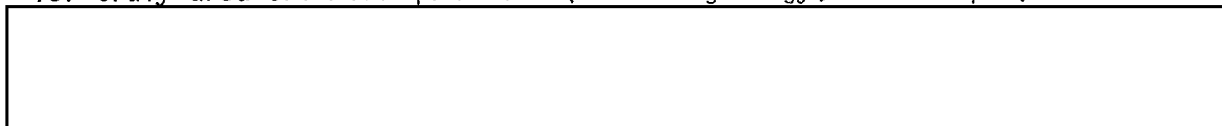


3. It occurs to me, however, that the potential application of color photography to both geographic and economic intelligence problems should not be ignored. This would seem particularly true in light of the comment made in the referenced memo stating that, "We feel that color film would be more desirable than black and white [] Our analysts are also very interested in color infra-red and feel that significant improvements in the SO-180 film would provide us with a very worthwhile system having numerous applications."

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4. The objections to using color film in the KH-4b (as your memo stated) have been singularly related to the question of resolution. The scale of the KH-4b, in concert with the very poorly color-corrected lens, makes the resolution of color with this camera of marginal utility, except for truly area-oriented questions (such as geology, for example). Such is



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5. The real questions are: How do we reasonably assess what kind of geographic intelligence problems are amenable to color photography? And how useful is the color photography for these problems vis-a-vis black and white? One way to get at these questions, of course, is to run controlled experiments. Certain experiments could be run rather easily if it seemed profitable to do so. For example, the 112B system on the U-2 can be employed domestically to acquire test photography if analogous problems can be defined. Such a test program has been employed for a number of years and is referred to as the Red Dot Program. I would also like your thoughts on the potential of tests over non-domestic areas that are amenable to U-2 coverage (such as Cuba, for example).

25X1D 6. If OBG I is interested in the potential applications of color photography [redacted] to their specific use(s) of satellite acquisitions, it is possible that some analysis in this regard could be undertaken. Specifically, I request your comments on experiments that could be run to obtain answers to the questions posed in paragraph 5 above.

25X1A 7. [redacted] and myself would be most happy to discuss the entire color program with your management if this is considered desirable. Your comments will be appreciated.

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[redacted]
NRO Color Task Force

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